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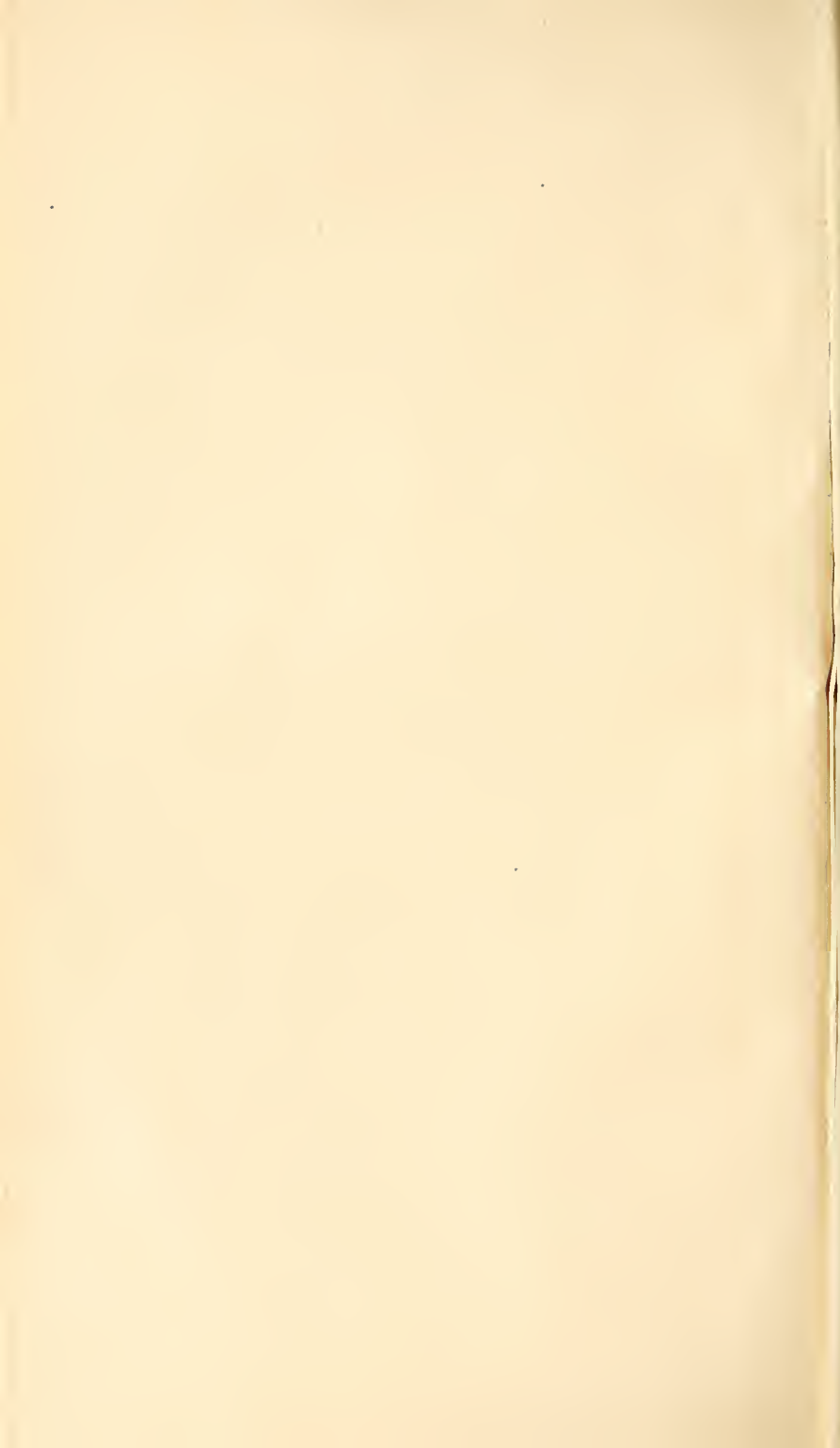




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Book 1439





J. Mellen

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Massachusetts Historical Society
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Address

TO THE

PEOPLE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

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ADDRESS
TO
The People
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

.....

FELLOW CITIZENS,

THE Legislature of Massachusetts have found themselves impelled by the existing crisis, and by the importunity of a large portion of their constituents, to depart from the sphere of their ordinary duties, and to bestow their serious consideration upon subjects which belong to the constitutional jurisdiction of the National Government. In this course, which they have with great reluctance thought necessary to adopt, they have not been unmindful of the rights and powers of that Government, nor of the dangers incident to an habitual interference of the State Legislatures in the great concerns of the Nation. They are deeply impressed with the importance of supporting that Government as the bond of an union, which experience has shewn to be capable of producing the highest measure of national felicity. They are aware of the embarrassment which may be created in times of peculiar public excitement, by

unreasonable expressions of discontent by individual States. And they readily concede, that a Government depending upon the confidence of the People to be enabled to do right, must have the power sometimes to do wrong; and that a sincere approbation of wise measures, should be accompanied by a magnanimous indulgence for the errors which are incident to human nature. When the National Administration ceases to possess the confidence of the People, it will lose confidence in itself; and from the want of this will always follow a deficiency of energy and stability indispensable to its success.

A system of measures especially respecting negotiations with foreign nations, must not be assailed by the rash and petulant opposition of a particular State, before its object and bearings are discovered. If a Legislature, yielding its dignity to the suggestions of impatience and discontent, proceeding from partial and interested sources, will undertake to decide upon questions exclusively of national cognizance, disturbance and confusion must ensue, both in the General and State Governments; and such conflicts, when they become frequent, can terminate only in a dissolution of the Union.

It is with a solemn apprehension and dread of this deplorable event, and with a most anxious solicitude to avoid any precedent which may however remotely tend to produce it, that the Legislature of Massachusetts have been influenced in all their deliberations. The caution and forbearance which are naturally imposed by these considerations, would have restrained them under circumstances not absolutely imperious, from expressing their opinion upon the measures of our National Rulers. They would have endured great sacrifices of interest; they would have acquiesced in great violence to their own views of national policy; they would have concealed their fears and suppressed their indignation, if the calamity in which the country is wantonly involved did

not threaten absolute ruin in its consequences, and forbid delay in the expression of their feelings. But they have been compelled to inquire for themselves, what can be done, when the whole community which they represent deems itself oppressed, and its local and permanent interests forever endangered; when the Administration, through pride of system, form a misapprehension of the interests of the country, or under the influence of a hostile disposition towards one nation, or under partiality to another, adopts and deliberately adheres to an infatuated policy, which arrests all the occupations and disturbs all the relations of society, and, by sapping the foundations of individual prosperity, drives a whole People to despair?

In this extremity the Legislature has endeavoured to conform to unexpected circumstances, and to the claims of their constituents upon their affections and duty. Endeavouring to divest themselves of passions and prejudices; protesting in the sight of God the sincerity of their attachment to the union of the States, and their determination to cherish and preserve it at every hazard, until it shall fail to secure to them those blessings which alone give value to any form of government; and, confident that under a wise administration it will always be adequate to this object; they have arraigned the measures of our National Rulers, not with a spirit of animosity, or a desire to expose them to obloquy and disgrace, but with a single view to stop their career in a course of measures to which it is physically as well as morally impossible for the People of this Commonwealth much longer to submit. The most important results of legislative deliberation upon these subjects, will appear in two Reports of a Committee of the House of Representatives, in another Report of a joint Committee, and in a Remonstrance to Congress; *all* of which are laid before the public. A candid examination of these documents will prob-

ably satisfy our constituents that less could not be done consistently with the claims of our fellow-citizens, nor more without authorizing a forcible resistance to Acts of Congress ; an ultimate resource, so deeply to be deprecated, that the cases which might justify it should not be trusted even to the imagination, until they actually happen.

While the Legislature insist upon their right, in common with all other lawful assemblies of their fellow-citizens, to express their opinion of public measures, and feel it to be their peculiar duty, as the immediate guardians of the rights of their constituents, to warn them of all unconstitutional acts and usurpations of the National Government ; and while they at the same time readily acknowledge the expediency of exercising this right ought to be restricted to cases of great national emergency, it is but justice to themselves to *demonstrate* that the present state of this Commonwealth is within this obvious exception.

The towns which have already presented petitions to the Legislature in their corporate capacity include nearly one third part of the taxable property of the Commonwealth, and many of them are towns which, at the commencement of the political year, were the supporters of the present Administration and are now represented by its friends. To this number must be added those who have not petitioned, but whose Representatives, with a full knowledge of the wishes of their constituents, have concurred in the measures of the Legislature ; and the minorities in other towns which still adhere to the Administration. Thus it is certain that an immense majority of the people of Massachusetts, may be considered as before the Legislature, describing the miseries and grievances of their situation, and requiring their interposition to obtain relief.

The language of the petitions from various quarters, and from all classes of the people, exhibits an

affecting picture of the public distress. The Merchant on the sea-coast has abandoned his enterprises, and the Trader in the country has lost his customers, his debts and his credits. The Ship-Owner beholds the silent and certain ruin of property, sufficient to carry on the principal trade of the world. The work-shop of the Mechanic is deserted, and the Ship-Builder is without employment. The produce of the Farmer has fallen in value; while all the articles for which he depends on foreign nations, have risen to a price which places them beyond his reach; and this misfortune will now be aggravated by an unprecedented addition of duties. The creditor from necessity presses on his debtor, and the debtor beholds his property sacrificed at half its value.

All these accumulated evils have been more particularly felt in the eastern part of the Commonwealth, where, by the annihilation of foreign commerce, and the oppressive restrictions on the coasting trade, a hardy People, who enjoyed competence and looked forward to affluence, have been involved in the deepest and most aggravating distress, while their lumber is left to rot on the banks of their rivers.

These existing evils are greatly aggravated by a prospect of the future. The habits of the world change and conform to circumstances. The nations that have hitherto been dependent on us for any portion of the necessaries of life, have learned that not dependence can be placed on supplies from a People whose experiments or prejudices may at any moment make them their victims. They have learned a secret highly injurious to us, that our commerce is not essential to their permanent welfare, and that nature has furnished them with advantages, which will enable them to dispense with all such of our exports as they have hitherto considered of the first necessity. Hence if this system

is longer continued, when the liberty of the sea shall at last be restored to us, we shall find ourselves mere vagrants on the ocean, and excluded from ports of whose commerce we once enjoyed the monopoly. The old channels of trade will be crowded with the ships of other nations; foreign marts will be supplied by the produce of their own fields and fisheries, and foreigners will be their own carriers. Even France, grown desperate by the necessity which her own tyrant imposes on her, feeds her own Colonies, and receives their produce in her own ships. But if trade should unexpectedly be opened to us and excite our enterprize, the whole machinery of commerce is so disordered, that years cannot restore it to its former activity. Old relations and connexions have been dissolved and are to be renewed. The credit of our Merchants abroad is to be re-established, and the main spring of navigation to be restored. Our Mariners have been driven by want and distress into foreign service, and are now fighting the battles of other nations, to escape perhaps in an honourable death the inglorious servility and humiliating dependence of helpless poverty. All these evils are aggravated by the consideration that they have been but useless sacrifices to a ruinous experiment, and that they are the result of measures as unavailing in their effect upon foreign nations as unequal in their operation on our own country.

Such is the faint outline of the situation of this People, as described by themselves in their various petitions. It is the more painful, as it comes into contrast with the unparalleled prosperity which immediately preceded it under former Administrations, and which an observance of their policy would still have ensured to our country.

The suspension of commerce, although the immediate cause of public distress, is also to be regarded as the effect of a departure from the system of

Washington, and of hostility to those who pursued his politics and enjoyed his confidence.

The limits of this Address will not permit a minute examination of the principles of the first Administrations, nor of a detailed comparison of them with those of the present. It is, however, undeniable, that the period of the two former Administrations was the golden age of America ; and such was the impulse given to the public prosperity, that it continued to influence the first period of the present Administration, notwithstanding the errors and deviations which were destined by a slow operation to reduce the nation to its present state. Yet it has not been perceived, that our present rulers have been called upon to encounter greater difficulties and embarrassments, arising from the state of the world, than those by which their predecessors were encompassed. France violated our commercial rights, insulted our Government, and availed herself of every art and intrigue to entangle us in an alliance with her ; but we escaped, and preserved our peace, our commerce, and our honour. The spoliations of Great-Britain on our commerce, excited resentment in the public mind, and demanded redress, which was obtained by negociation, and our useful and lucrative connexion with that country was still maintained.

Whatever are the motives which may be presumed recently to influence the conduct of those respective nations towards the United States ; it is probable they were then of the same character and description as at present. The sympathy of the People in the French revolution was general and ardent ; their irritation against Great-Britain, feverish and violent ; yet under the pressure of these external circumstances, combined with rebellion in the heart of the country, without the benefit of example to guide, or experience to confirm its measures, the New Government was enabled to preserve

peace at home, and with half its present resources, to prepare for war, and command respect abroad.

By what fatality has it then happened, that the prosperity of our country has experienced this fatal reverse?

A full and satisfactory reply to this inquiry would lead to a review of the whole history of our Government, from its commencement to the present time, and is therefore not to be expected in a brief Address. But a respectful attention to the complaints of the People requires that the principal causes should be at least suggested.

The first of them is to be found in the love of power and the pride of system, which, united to the spirit of party, have been exerted to secure to one portion of the Union a controlling influence over the other. The People of the United States may be classed under three *general* descriptions; the agricultural, the planting, and the mercantile interests. The first includes the Farmers of those States who cultivate their own lands by the hands of freemen. The second comprises the Planters of the Southern States, who cultivate their lands by slaves. The last may be considered as including the Merchants, Seamen, Mechanics, Manufacturers, and all who are connected with or dependent upon trade and commerce. The interests of these three classes are naturally favourable to each other, and may be easily so combined by a wise Government as to be instrumental in promoting the prosperity of all, and the greatest attainable degree of national strength; or they may be so severed by a weak and partial Administration as to render each a prey to jealousies, strife, and unnatural competitions, which will be equally ruinous to all.

The mercantile class are the principal proprietors of the active capital of the country, and their welfare is inseparable from the success of commerce and navigation.

This class is proportionably the most numerous in the Eastern States. And in these States, considering them as one section of the country, the interests of the farmer and merchant are, from usage and ancient relation, as well as from the nature of things, so blended and connected, that the one has scarcely less advantage from the success of commerce and navigation than the other. This cannot be affirmed with the same precision in regard to the planting interest. To this class commerce is also essential, but it is of less importance whether their commerce be carried on by the navigation of their own, or of a foreign country. A small proportion only of ships and vessels is owned by their merchants. On the contrary, an immense portion of the wealth of the Eastern section of the Union consists in shipping. For example, in the year 1805, the aggregate tonnage of the United States was eleven hundred and forty thousand three hundred and sixty-eight tons; of which Massachusetts owned four hundred twenty-five thousand nine hundred and forty-eight tons, including upwards of one fourth of the whole coasting vessels, more than one third of the whalemén, and nearly six sevenths of the cod-fishermen. No nation has ever prosecuted a successful navigation without the protection of a naval force; but as such a force would naturally augment the strength and wealth of that part of the Union in which it should be built and manned, it would be an easy task to inspire the planting interest with a jealousy of such an establishment, and to inculcate upon them a belief in the plausible though fallacious theory, that commerce, like agriculture, must protect itself. This jealousy once excited is naturally ripened into hostility, and extended to those men and States that are principally concerned in commerce. The farmer who lives in a commercial State, becomes at first the dupe of these prejudices, and deceived by the similarity of names, believes his interest to be the same with the planter's.

and lends his aid to weaken the commercial system. Thus the planting interest obtaining an ascendancy throughout the Union, is enabled to aggrandize itself, and give laws to the nation.

The great WASHINGTON, considering himself the father of the whole people, was incapable of giving countenance to the jealousies arising from these causes. He was the avowed friend of commerce, and the advocate for its protection by means of a navy.

For the sake of commerce, he concluded a treaty with Great-Britain, amid the clamours of opposition. He patronized Banks and monied institutions, as indispensable to the general welfare; and felt that the interest of each class, and the power and wealth of each State were for the benefit of all. His successor adopted his system, and urged to the utmost of his power the provision for a naval establishment.

Far different has been the policy of the present Administration. Under it we have seen the spirit of party and of hostility to the interests of navigation burn with redoubled ardor, and all attempts to protect them abandoned. The navy has been permitted to go to decay, and the commercial treaty with England to expire. The New-England farmer has been wheedled into a belief that he has no greater interest in the success of navigation than a Virginia planter. The doctrine has been propagated, that the commerce which cannot protect itself is unworthy of protection. That in time of peace, when no danger exists, it must be used as a source of revenue; but in time of war it must be abandoned, and those engaged in it must betake themselves to other pursuits; and finally, that it is not an object of protection, but an instrument of coercion.

Ostentatious displays of the payment of the public debt have created a delusive popularity, which has led the Administration to presume upon their power

to coerce the commercial States at their will and pleasure. They have proscribed and displaced all who would have dared to give them true information, and thus shut up the avenues to a just estimate of the interests and feelings of this people. They have been deceived by men who were themselves either ignorant or deceived, and they have arrayed the people against each other in an attitude highly dishonourable to the nation, and menacing consequences at which every patriot citizen must tremble.

Another capital defect in the present system, will be found in the total omission to estimate properly the danger and state of our foreign relations.

There has been no period since the French revolution, that has not been pregnant with danger to the peace of this nation. Our collisions with the belligerent powers have been incessant; and we have been in several years repeatedly on the eve of a war with Spain. During the whole term of Mr. Jefferson's Administration, the revenue from commerce, owing to the immense capital that had been accumulated under the auspices of his predecessors, was yearly augmented; yet the appropriations for national defence have been truly contemptible.

Our harbours have been constantly exposed to the smallest naval armament. No establishments have been made for naval or military instruction; no serious preparations for a state of war. Every important object has been sacrificed to the pretence of diminishing the public debt; the merit of which is hardly a theme for exultation, when it is considered that the whole amount of the reduction of the debt, since Mr. Jefferson's Administration, is not equal to the additional revenue for the same time, beyond that of the preceding Administrations. This false economy and unwarlike attitude has probably conduced to degrade us in the estimation of Europe, and expose us to outrage and insult.

Another and principal cause of our difficulties may be found in the conduct of the Administration towards Great-Britain and France. It is certainly the misfortune of the party in power, that their professions of strict impartiality towards the Belligerent Nations have been accompanied by language and conduct which have prevented their being accredited.

That a party existed in this country prior to the conclusion of the late war, which, either from a sense of gratitude or dependence, was disposed to overvalue the part taken by France in our Revolution, is not to be denied. It is equally certain, that the present leading members of the ruling party were reputed to be the firm confidential friends of the French ministry, and advocates of their policy. It has also uniformly been stated, that these gentlemen, or their friends, at the close of the Revolutionary War, did insist in Congress, conformably to the wishes and suggestions of the French cabinet, that neither the express acknowledgment of our independence by Great-Britain, nor our right to the fisheries, nor the possession of the Western Country, and the free navigation of the Mississippi, should be indispensable conditions in the proposed treaty of peace. It has also been uniformly stated, without contradiction, that these same persons were of the party which procured instructions to be given to our Minister appointed to negotiate the treaty of peace, to act only with the consent and concurrence of the French cabinet in every article of the treaty; and that when our Ministers, Adams and Jay, in spite of the perfidious intrigues of Vergennes, obtained from Great-Britain the recognition of our Independence, secured to us the fisheries which France demanded for herself, preserved a right to the navigation of the Mississippi, and obtained a clear title to the Western Country, this same party endeavoured in Congress to procure a vote of censure against our Min-

isters for this exertion of patriotism and independence.

In the year 1794, this same party, under pretence of securing our rights, proposed a series of resolutions in Congress, founded on their favourite policy of coercing Britain by our commercial warfare; but which at that period would have inevitably involved us in a war with her, and in consequence an alliance with France, that would have made us a party in all the wars in which she has been since engaged, and sharers in the fate which has befallen all her allies.

The same party opposed the mission of Mr. Jay to England, and violently condemned the treaty concluded by that Minister, which has so greatly conduced to the unparalleled prosperity of this country. And during the whole of the time that the American People were agitated by the first events of the French Revolution, and the cabals of the French Ministers, they were regarded by those Ministers as friendly to France, and charged with having a language official and a language confidential.

At a subsequent period, the same party in the Assembly of Virginia, and other legislative bodies, as well as in Congress, opposed all defensive measures against France, whose indiscriminate robberies threatened the extermination of our commerce, and whose indignities and outrages towards our public Ministers had awakened a sentiment of indignation in all impartial minds.

The same party have permitted the British treaty to expire without attempting to renew it, and have rejected another treaty, framed by their own confidential Ministers, which contained a substantial security for our claims to the rights of neutrals, and refused their assent to arrangements which would have obviated the inconveniences and injuries sustained by the impressment of our seamen.

The same party have refused to accept reparation from Great-Britain for the outrage committed on the Chesapeake, for reasons of mere punctilio, and thus have preserved unnecessarily this ground of national animosity, and have finally adopted the ruinous system of Embargo, which is in substance the same that has been required by the French Emperor of his vassal nations, and has received his explicit approbation in official communications to his Senate.

If these facts and circumstances were not sufficient to establish the conclusion, that the Administration have uniformly inclined to the views and policy of France; their measures and their language, subsequent to the late obnoxious decrees and orders of both Belligerents, must remove all doubt upon this subject.

The Legislature cannot now attempt an elaborate examination of the documents relative to the negotiation with these powers, which have been submitted to public inspection; nor is it necessary to repeat the inference, which will be found in the Reports and Memorial which they have adopted.

Let it be conceded, to avoid argument, that the Administration have exerted all their skill and power in sincere efforts to preserve our neutrality, but that the mutual injustice of France and Great-Britain has at length compelled them to withdraw into a retirement, in which they mean not to remain, and whence they cannot emerge without becoming a party in the war; what is the obvious policy, in the prospect and in the event of such an alternative; which might have been expected, and ought to have been foreseen? Should they consume months and years in piteous moans at a fate too common to neutral nations, or in active preparations to meet it? Should they content themselves with invectives and complaints and menaces against both Belligerents, or

prepare magazines and fleets and armies to encounter one of them?

That a nation sincerely desirous of neutrality should be forced into a war, is an event always to be deplored, but frequently to be expected. Under this misfortune it is a consolation to have the power of choosing the least formidable enemy, and a duty to make such an election. The situation of the United States and of the world should preclude all hesitation upon their policy, when circumstances shall compel them to an ultimate decision.

That a war with Great-Britain would lead to an alliance with France, is beyond dispute; and that this connexion must be forever fatal to the liberty and independence of the nation, is obvious to all who are not blinded by partiality and passion. This consideration should be decisive with an American cabinet, admitting all our complaints of British violence and injuries to be perfectly just. But to judge from the measures and language of the partizans of Administration, the reverse of this policy is contemplated, if war becomes unavoidable. The whole system of commercial restriction is now, without its original disguise, intended against Great-Britain. The warlike measures contemplated and proposed, though not yet adopted, are coupled with menaces against the British Colonies and commerce.

The halls of Congress and other places, in which the Administration preserves a majority, resound with the fulminations of rage and reproach, and revenge against Great-Britain and her Government, amid which the faint murmurs and occasional exclamations against French unkindness are lost almost before they reach the ear.

Of the motives to this conduct on the part of the National Government, this Legislature can discern no satisfactory solution, but in an habitual and impolitic predilection for France. Without pretending to compare and adjust the respective injuries sus-

tained from the two nations, it cannot be disguised that in some instances our nation has received from Great-Britain compensation, in others, offers of atonement, and in all, the language of conciliation and respect ; while from France, our immense losses are without retribution, and our remonstrances are neglected with contemptuous silence, or answered with aggravating insult. While hostility with Great-Britain would expose our country and our commerce in every vulnerable point, and afford no hope of honour or indemnity, a war with France would not be very different from the only state of peace which she is disposed to maintain.

Under these circumstances, can it be contended that the policy is either just or wise, which would dictate either open hostility against Great-Britain, or a series of irritating measures tending to that state ?

Thus, fellow-citizens, has the Legislature reluctantly presented you with a general view of the causes which have reduced you to your present calamitous state. But these would have been insufficient, if you, and the People of those States whose interests are similar to your's, had remained vigilant for the common welfare.

The present leading men in the Southern States, have beheld with jealousy your increasing prosperity, and feel neither respect for your pursuits, nor sensibility for your sufferings ; yet it can hardly be supposed, that they would willingly drive to extremities a section of the country which they believed to be a united people ; who still regard them with fraternal feelings, who claim only a fair attention to their local habits and necessities, and who are willing in any just or necessary cause, to devote their lives and their fortunes to the common defence. They have been deceived. The spirit of proscription, originating with the present Administration, has almost wholly driven from the Nation.

al Councils that description of men who are the natural Representatives of your true interests. Their places have been supplied by those who were disposed to flatter the ruling party, and promote their measures and policy. The same spirit of political persecution was introduced into the State Governments, and at length in this State openly avowed and displayed in a written treatise, by the present Chief Magistrate. The novel doctrine of excluding from power and office all who differed in any article of political faith from the great head of the nation, soon became current. The people were dazzled with the delusive glitter of a full treasury, and deafened by clamours excited against those who first provided the means of filling it. Their confidence was withdrawn from their old and tried friends; and the politicians of the South were encouraged to hope, by your own Representatives, that if your unanimity did not ensure the popularity of their measures, your divisions would prevent their defeat. Thence their apparent union and enthusiasm in favour of a system which appears to you little short of infatuation. Hence their belief that you will acquiesce in a sacrifice of your vital interests, without a perception of necessity, and plunge into war with a certainty of ruin.

If for these evils it was in the power of the Legislature to devise any temporary remedy, you are sensible that a concurrence from the present Executive Magistrate of the Commonwealth could not be expected. But as the malady is deep, you will still be deceived by trusting to any momentary relief. You must realize and comprehend the nature of your peculiar interests, and by steady, persevering and well-concerted efforts, rise into an attitude to promote and preserve them. The farmer must remember that his prosperity is inseparable from that of the merchant, and that there is little affinity between his condition and habits and those of a southern

planter. The interests of New-England must be defined, understood, and firmly represented. A perfect intelligence must be cultivated among those States, and a united effort must be made and continued to acquire their just influence in the National Government. For this purpose the Constitution should be amended, and the provision which gives to holders of slaves a representation equal to that of 600,000 free citizens, should be abolished. Experience proves the injustice, and time will increase the inequality of this principle, the original reason for which has entirely failed.

Other amendments to secure commerce and navigation from a repetition of destructive and insidious theories, are indispensable.

Towards effecting these salutary reforms, or any other which experience may prove to be fair and necessary for the prosperity of the commercial States, the restoration of full and entire confidence to those who feel their necessity, and are anxious to promote them, is the first dictate of wisdom. The Legislature are aware that their measures and sentiments will encourage their opponents in propagating the foul imputation of a design to dismember the Union. But when did party malice want a theme to excite popular prejudice? When did it have recourse to one more absurd and unfounded? Why should those by whose instrumentality the confederacy was formed, be bent on the destruction of their own work? Why should the disciples of Washington forget the maxims of his government, and the precepts of his school? If the dissolution of the Union would be an evil, have the objects of this calumny less at stake than its authors? Those men and their adherents, who now point out the defects which experience has displayed in the present policy and Constitution are those who invited the public attention to the deficiency of the old Confederation. It was at that time their object to strengthen the Union; it is not less their object at

this time. But as the Union itself originated in a spirit of compromise, the Administration of the government should be influenced by the same spirit. If the Southern States are disposed to avail themselves of the advantages resulting from our strength and resources for common defence, they must be willing to patronize the interests of navigation and commerce, without which our strength will be weakness. If they wish to appropriate a portion of the public revenue towards roads, canals, or for the purchase of arms and the improvement of their militia, they must consent that you, who purchase your own arms, and have already roads, canals and militia, in most excellent order, shall have another portion of it devoted to a naval protection. If they, in the spirit of chivalry, are ready to rush into an unnecessary and ruinous war with one nation, they must suffer you to pause before you bid an eternal adieu to your independence by an alliance with another.

There is not a greater diversity of interests between them and yourselves than will be found in the distant provinces of all great empires ; none, indeed, that a truly national administration cannot reconcile. It is believed too, that many of your southern brethren accord with you in their estimate of the true interests of their country, and are inclined magnanimously to sacrifice local prejudices to national safety and honour. This happy result may be expected, when New-England, faithful to her true interests, shall speak with one voice, and exclude from her councils those, who from misapprehension of those interests, or any other cause, are advocates for the present destructive system. Then, and not till that time, will a temper of mutual accommodation begin to display itself in the measures of government, and a steady, dignified conduct shield the nation from foreign and domestic dangers. The Congress of the United States will no longer be the theatre of base contention and sanguinary threats. The spirit of private

combat will no longer be the test of public spirit. and the denunciations of vanity and inexperience will cease to be vented against powerful members of the common Union.

It would indeed be a grateful occupation to the Legislature to apply an immediate remedy to the evils of which the Petitioners complain and which we fear will be aggravated by a continuance of the existing commercial restrictions, or substitutes not less oppressive and fatal, though veiled under new titles. But they are compelled to avow that it is with the People themselves that every efficient plan of redress must originate. While the advocates for British war and the contemnners of commerce can calculate upon your divisions, they will advance in their mad and presumptuous course, and rely upon your Governors and your Representatives to neutralize your opposition to their measures. But when they perceive that you are prepared to break the chains imposed by a fatal and mistaken policy, and that all the constituted authorities of New-England are united in sentiment and purpose; when they are sensible that you are able to resist, and that self-preservation will make resistance a duty, they will reflect upon your claims, and yield to the justice of your pretensions. They will feel that the confederation is intended for the general welfare, and that it is only by paying some regard to this object, we can maintain that union which common interest should make perpetual.

On the contrary, nothing less than a perfect union and intelligence among the Eastern States can preserve to them any share of influence in the National Government. Without influence they can expect no regard to their interest, but are exposed to the effects of a policy, whose object will be to secure power and office, with a view to local and personal aggrandizement, and to make them *Colonial Govern-*

ments, subject to the worst form of domination, that of one member of a confederacy over another.

The present state of our connexion is not far from this condition. The late election of Representatives to Congress, and the votes for President, plainly demonstrate the disapprobation of the present system by a great majority of the Eastern people. Mr. Madison, who was known to favour it, had not a vote in those States, except in Vermont; and recent elections there afford evidence that at this moment he would have none. On the other hand, in the Southern States, from the artificial popularity of this fatal system, his majority has been triumphant.

The same division is apparent in Congress. The known wishes of the Eastern States have been not merely neglected, but rejected with threatenings and contempt.

Politicians of yesterday, from the back woods and mountains, vie with each other in the language of insult and defiance, and the men whom you delight to honor, and the great majority of those who have the deepest interests at stake, in the welfare of the country, are stigmatized as a corrupt and seditious part of the community. Even when those of your own Representatives, who have encouraged this presumptuous conduct by their own countenance, discovering their errors, are desirous to recede, repentance comes too late. Thus, under new names, and with the same views, the Embargo system is still riveted upon our unhappy country, in spite of the opposition of some of those who appear too late desirous of retrieving their constituents from ruin. Thus a Bill has already passed one branch of the Legislature, authorizing Letters of Marque and Reprisal; a measure calculated either to provoke an open war with Great-Britain, or to protract the irritation and controversies subsisting between us. Choose, then, fel-

low-citizens, between the condition of citizens of a free State, possessing its equal weight and influence in the National Government; or that of a Colony free in name, but in fact enslaved by sister States.

In SENATE, March 1, 1809.

Read and accepted.

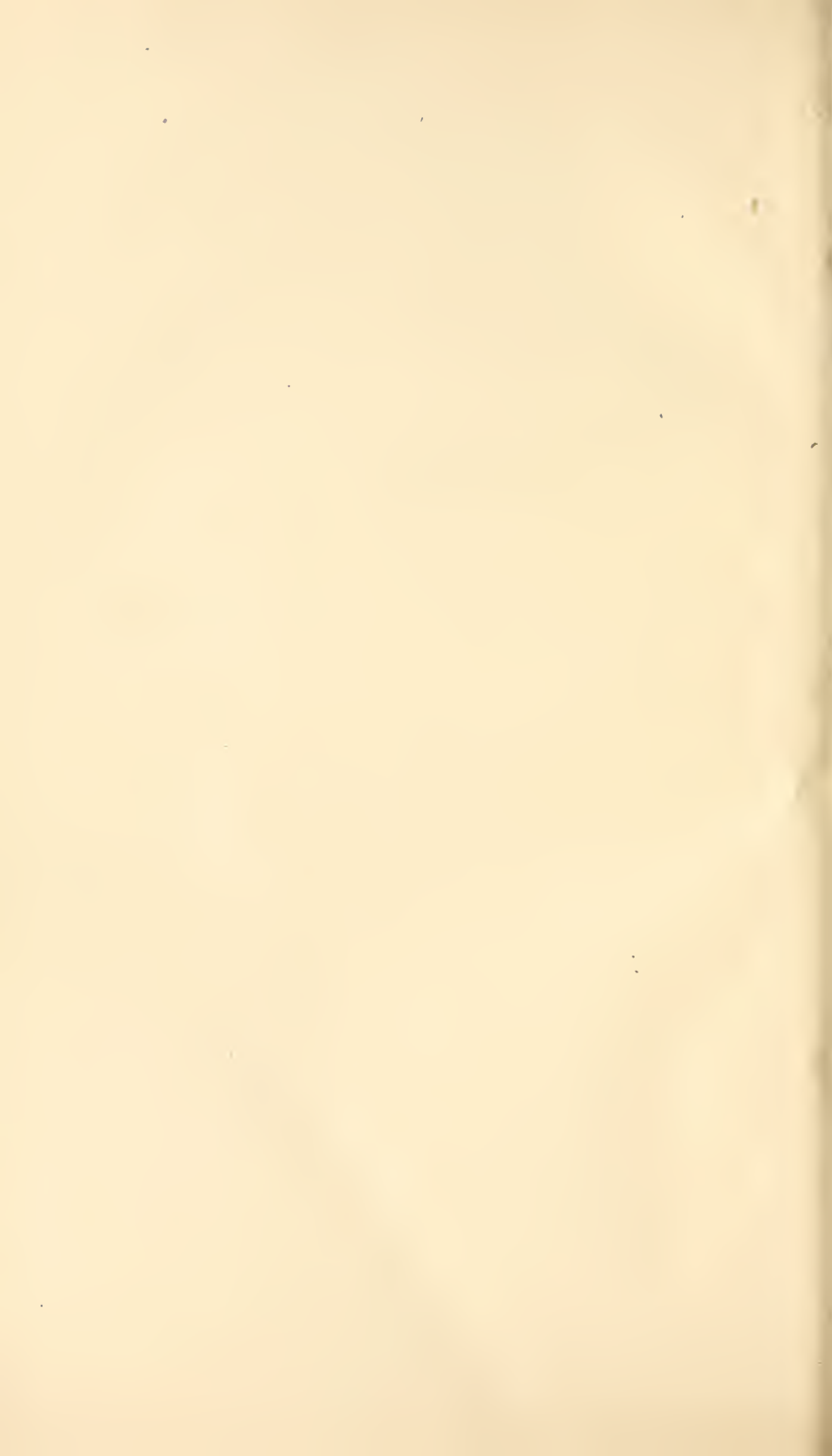
Sent down for concurrence.

HARRISON G. OTIS, *President.*

In the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 2, 1809.

Read and concurred.

TIMOTHY BIGELOW, *Speaker.*



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